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A TRANSLATION
INTO
ENGLISH VERSE
OF
VIRGIL'S FOURTH GEORGIC

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DOBELL COLLECTION

A Translation into English Verse of Virgil's Fourth Georgic. By Charles Robertson Honey, Second Master of Sutton Coldfield Grammar School. Leamington: Nathaniel Merridew.

YOUNG aspirants in literature, or art, or science, or indeed in anything on which the well-being of society depends, ought to be encouraged; they ought to be patted rather than struck, even if they do not come up to the standard of undoubted excellence. We are free to acknowledge that this translation does its author credit. Although we should not have been very forward to do over again what has been already done by the Marquis of Normanby and Dryden with the almost universal approbation of mankind, yet we ought to be the rather pleased than otherwise, that the masterpieces of the ancient world are being now again presented to the public in new dresses, somewhat after the latest fashion. We have seen so many fashions pass away, and sometimes ridiculed into discontinuance, that we cannot be expected to be much influenced by any fashion. There is such a thing as correct taste, or what is justly regarded as perfection in style; hence we wish to be influenced by a due appreciation of what has stood the test of time, rather than be drawn to admire the caprice of the moment. It is singular that both Dryden and Mr. Honey introduce the epithet "ambrosial." Mr. Dryden in the second line, and Mr. Honey in the first of their translations. Now "ambrosia" is the food of the gods, whilst "nectar" is their drink; and although the poets of Greece and Rome say so much of these elements of sustentation, as enjoyed by the gods, they never tell us what this meat and drink consist of, or are like; simply for the reason that they never knew, nor pretended to know. It was enough to imagine that the celestials lived somehow or other, and on something or other; imagination and the impersonation of things were the two main attributes of the ancient poetic world. The world is now too much matter of fact, so that it is hardly possible for man or woman to be poetical in these days, even if he or she be born in the poetic mould, unless urged on by the fire of Pindar, or riding on a pegasean steed, thus challenging the derision of mankind, on the remote chance of commanding admiration. Virgil, of course, does not misapply the word "ambrosia;" and we are surprised that Dryden and Mr. Honey do. Had Mr. Honey stuck to the signification of his own name, he would have been right. We think it is of very little use to give bare poetic translations of the ancients; such translations should ever be accompanied with short judicious notes by way of explanation for the general reader. The story of Orpheus' and Eurydice's hapless love can never cease to be admired as told by Virgil. Mr. Honey's version runs thus:—

"The queen of hell command on Orpheus laid,
That he should not look back upon the maid.
Th' incautious swain a sudden frenzy seized,
Excusable if e'er aught hell appeased;
He stopped, and on Eurydice he looked,
No long delay the ardent lover brooked;
Unmindful he, and overcome at last,
That fatal glance where day-light blaze was cast.
There all love's labour suddenly was lost,
This act so rash his dearest treasure cost.
The rule is broken of the ruthless king;
Three times throughout Avernus crashes ring."

From Virgil's Fourth Georgic, we find that the instincts of bees was as well understood as they are now, after an interval of two thousand years. The Romans called the Queen Bee the King Bee: they had no idea of being ruled or reigned over by a woman; hence they nationally made the ruler of the bee-hive a male, and called him KING. It is difficult to believe that Virgil thought that bees could be reproduced from the putrescent inwards of a steer beaten to death. At all events the moderns know much better. It took Virgil seven years to write his four books of Georgics. Translators should remember this. We would bid Mr. Honey not to be afraid to mount his Pegasus; if he fall, he wont injure himself much; and if he does, fools will be sure to amuse themselves at his expense, and he can laugh in his sleeve at them in turn.

With the Author's Compliments
Sutton Coldfield Apr. 20. 1861 -

A TRANSLATION

INTO

ENGLISH VERSE

OF

VIRGIL'S FOURTH GEORGIC,

BY

CHARLES ROBERTSON HONEY,

Second Master of Sutton Coldfield Grammar School.

"NESCIT VOX MISSA REVERTI."

LEAMINGTON:
PRINTED BY NATHANIEL MERRIDEW, RUSSELL TERRACE
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TO

THE REVEREND WILLIAM TAYLOR JONES, M.A.,

Fellow and Vice-President of the Royal College of Preceptors, and Principal of Sydenham College.

My Dear Sir,

When I tell you that this work is the first effort of my pen you will be at no loss to conceive the labour in which a natural anxiety has involved me—labour, which, perhaps, a more practised writer would not have expended upon so small a volume. This first labour I dedicate to you, partly, that I may give expression to my sense of the value of your friendship and approbation; partly, that I may acknowledge kindnesses received from you when I was entering upon my career in life; and partly, on account of the intimate alliance which subsists between your name and the cause of education. That this present work will give any additional impulse to that cause I would not presume to hope or assert. A distant glimpse of the brilliance of Virgil's poetry may, perhaps, be caught from this translation, and so, a longing for a closer acquaintance with all his works may be communicated; thus, indirectly, these pages may be of service. But, in candour I must own that I have projected this work with no such object in view. The indulgence of a private fancy is my sole motive; and, consequently, I cannot justly expect that consideration from the reader which a work proceeding from a more generous incitement might demand.

My reasons for dedicating these pages to you I have already named; but, sir, although a letter of dedication frequently implies a certain round of compliments, I have neither opportunity nor inclination to frame them. Your own correct sense of propriety would induce you to reject a fulsome flattery, and no effort of mine is necessary to add emphasis to what is true. I trust that, in the mere fact of my requesting permission to dedicate this work to you, you may recognize a tacit avowal of my appreciation of you and your regards.

I remain, my dear Sir,
With every feeling of affection and respect,
Very faithfully yours,
C. R. HONEY.

Sutton Coldfield,
May, 1859.

ERRATA.

Page 6, *line* 22, *for* streamlets *read* streamlet's.
„ 11, „ 22, *for* autumual *read* autumnal.
„ 23, „ 14, *for* Anis *read* Anio.
„ 23, „ 17, *for* stream *read* streams.
„ 24, „ 20, *for* please'd *read* pleaséd.
„ 27, „ 23, *for* fiercly *read* fiercely.
„ 29, *omit the first line.*
„ 29, *line* 14, *for* channel *read* channels.
„ 30, „ 10, *for* Averuus *read* Avernus.
„ 34, „ 6, *for* Fityrus *read* Tityrus.

TRANSLATION

INTO

ENGLISH VERSE

OF

VIRGIL'S FOURTH GEORGIC.

Ambrosial sweets shall next employ my muse,
Thy smile, my patron! do not thou refuse;
Of puny creatures wondrous sights I shew,
Their leaders brave, their conduct towards their foe,
Their habits, their pursuits, their battles dire,
Wherein the race engage with venomed ire.
If Phœbus prayed-to deigns his ear to lend,
And adverse deities to suppliants bend,
Though small the theme, they suffer me to sing,
This round my name will brightest lustre fling.

First must be sought a settlement and place
Where chilling blasts intrude not on the race,

(For winds oppose the toiling bee), nor sheep,
Nor butting goats o'er Flora's treasures leap,
Nor heifers straying crush the tender blade,
And dash the dew-drops from the sparkling glade.
With scaly spots the lizards raise alarm,
And hostile birds spread terror through the swarm,
She too whose breast is marked with bloody stains,
Far from the honied stores must be these banes.
They ravage all, and to their cruel brood
The birds in beak bring home the bees for food.
But crystal springs, and pools o'ergrown with moss,
If far away, the bees will feel their loss;
The threading stream that hurries through the mead,
A porch with palms' or olives' shade they need;
That, when young swarms sent newly from the comb
Fresh kings in genial spring lead forth from home,
A neighb'ring bank may lure them from the heat,
And tree hard by afford a cool retreat.
Stagnant or not, the water's surface spread
With osier twigs, and with great stones its bed;
That stragglers, if by stormy Eurus dashed,
Or if, perchance, in streamlets eddy washed,
A rest may find on bridges always nigh,
And stretch their wings before the sun to dry.

Let wild thyme far and near its odours spread,
And liquid streams soak through the violet-bed,
Here too let verdant lavender abound,
And savory strong in plenty here be found.
No matter though the hive of bark you make,
Or for the fabric pliant twigs you take,
The entrance small must be, for frosts and heats
Alike are hostile to the stored-up sweets.
The winter's frosts to solid masses freeze
And summer's heats reduce to liquid these.
On this account the bees with resin ply
Each slender chink, and every margin try
To fill with flowers and bee-glue; thus a hoard
Of gluten thick for this is always stored,
Gluten more binding than the bird-lime rich,
More binding too than Phrygian Ida's pitch.
Oft too their hive they dig beneath the ground
Their Lares here and ties of home are found;
If tales be true, in hollow rocks they live,
And in the trunks of trees they rear their hive.
The gaping crannies thou must smear with clay,
And likewise o'er the hive thin foliage lay.
You must not yew trees near their precincts keep,
Boil not red crabs, trust not the stagnant deep,
Nor fetid smells, nor hollowed rocks, whence sounds
The "unseen nymph," and speech reflected bounds.

When golden suns drive winter from the sight,
And then unveil the sky with glowing light,
The bees through grove and wood their courses take,
Streams surface skim, their thirst by sipping slake,
Spring's gayest treasures suck, and hence are blest
With food and matter for their young and nest.
When from the hive discharged you view the swarm
Rise far aloft, and cleave the æther warm,
Then watch the cloud, as floating on the wind
They long fresh streams and leafy homes to find.
Here dainties spread, the pounded honey-flower,
And honey-suckle seen in every bower,
Raise jingling sounds and Vesta's cymbal's shake,
The bees forthwith will settle, and will make
In places sprinkled o'er with herbs their hive,
And in the hollow home as erst will live.
But if they go to fight—for discord's jar
Often excites two kings to open war,—
You can forthwith foretell the people's rage,
Their longings for their Lares to engage;
For bugles' call the stragglers summons in,
There too is heard the trumpets' warlike din.
Then hurriedly they meet with quivering wings,
Prepare their claws, and whet their venomed stings,
In dense array around the royal tent
Collect, and challenge foes on war intent.

When gentle spring comes on, to open meads
They haste to prove their strength by warlike deeds;
High up is heard the distant sound of war,
A massive crowded globe is seen afar;
As thick as shaken holm-oak's plenteous crop,
As thick as pelting hail to earth they drop.
Amongst their troops the kings with glittering crests
Show courage stirring in their little breasts,
Unyielding each until the victor's might
Or these, or those has urged to shameful flight.
These outbursts and these contests soon die out
If in the air you fling small dust about.
But when you call the leaders from the field
Whereon their future destiny is sealed,
The worse destroy, for he will prove a drone,
Install the victor on the vacant throne.
The one with scaly spots of gold will glow,
For this by far the fairer form will shew
With burnished mail; the other drowsy sleeps,
Or with great paunch inglorious slowly creeps.
Two kinds of bees are like the two of kings;
The one all sluggish folds his filthy wings,
Like way-worn traveller, who on the ground
Spits forth his dusty mouthfuls all around.
The other sparkles and darts back the rays
With golden lustre on bright sunny days,

Patched is its body with well ordered spots;
This latter kind is better than the sots.
Hence you will press the sweets at seasons fixed,
Sweets that when with Falernian wine are mixed
A softened tone to brimming cups impart,
Dismissing sorrows while they cheer the heart.
But when on fickle wing the bees disport,
Desert their combs, nor to their hive resort,
Restrain these roving tastes; the labour's small;
Cut off the leaders' wings; arrested all,
They will not venture through the liquid air,
Nor from the camp the royal ensign tear.
Let subtle perfumes on the fragrant breeze
Attract to beds of beauty rare the bees;
Let Hellespont its god with willow hook,
On whom the thieves and birds with terror look,
Contribute to protect the bees from harm,
That they may revel here without alarm.
From cloud capped mountains those who bees attend
Should pines and thyme transplant, and thus should lend
Their hands to toil by planting shrubs around,
And genial waters sprinkling o'er the ground.
Did I not furl my sail and towards the beach
My vessel steer, and strive the port to reach,

I might perhaps the plans of culture sing
Which to the rose two summer blushes bring,
How succory and parsley's margent green
Delight o'er crystal brooks their heads to lean,
How twisting through the grass to giant size
Cucumbers swell and vainly strive to rise;
I would not pass Narcissus blooming late,
I would acanthus' pliant stem narrate,
The pallid ivy, and the myrtle sweet,
Which loves its kindred briny foam to greet.
For once I saw beneath Tarentine towers,
Where dark Galesus laves the golden bowers,
An old Cilician blest with acres few
Whereon scarce food for men or cattle grew.
Yet little poppies 'mid the thickets here
He grew with vervain and with lilies clear;
Content he spread a royal feast at night,
When, shadows deep'ning in the waning light,
Beneath a heavy load he oft returned;
From mother earth his unbought food was earned.
He first in spring the blushing rose would pick,
For him the first, autumual fruits grew thick
And when stern winter rent the massive rocks,
And stopped the channels with its icy blocks,
His toil in pruning did not once abate,
Whilst he rebuked the spring and zephyrs late.

The first was he to shew his swarms of bees,
And foaming sweets to press from combs of these.
Most fruitful pines and limes by him were grown;
Whatever buds the trees in spring had shewn
When Flora decked them with her colours rare,
So many ripened and repaid his care.
His elms of tardy growth he set in rows,
His trees of plums which once bore only sloes,
His hardy pear-tree, and, by river's brink,
His shady plane to shelter those who drink.
But these I leave for other bards to tell,
My narrow limits silence here compel.

And now I'll sing what nature in this race
It pleased immortal Jove himself to place.
For, when they heard the cymbal's clashing sound,
The bees, in numbers flocking, swarmed around
To feed the child in Dicte's rugged cave,
To them the royal babe this nature gave.
These only trust their offspring to the state,
And have their common hall for small and great;
With laws immutable they rule their hive,
They love their homes and soil on which they live.
Mindful of frosts they bear the summer heat,
That they may stock the cells with treasures sweet.
Intent on food some o'er the meadows scour

To suck the sweets from every dewy flower;
Some in the hive remain and rear the comb
Upon Narcissus' tears and viscous gum,
And then in vaults the wax tenacious prop;
Others the lusty young, the nation's hope,
Rear up, whilst others every waxen cell
With heavenly dews and purest honey swell.
By lot elected sentinels attend
To give the sign when clouds and showers impend.
Some take the burdens from the worker's thigh,
And, forces gathering, from the comb some try
To drive the wasps.—All toil with eager haste,
Whilst honey fills the air with fragrance chaste—
Just as, when Ætna's crew their bolts complete
From molten masses white with glowing heat,
Some ply the bellows with alternate stroke,
And some in troughs the hissing metal soak;
Ætna 'mid din of anvils thunders low,
The giants raise their arms and aim their blow
With mighty energy to steady beat,
And turn the metal glowing still with heat.
Just so (if small with great may be compared)
By instinct Attic swarms have ever shared
The love of toiling to support the hive,
And all for getting sweets their utmost strive.
The aged sires the colony protect,

By them with skilful art the hive is decked.
The weary youth at even late come back
With burdened thighs. They, in their flowery track,
Feed on arbutus berries; willows gray
With fragrant cassia, and the crocus gay,
The fertile teil, and hyacinthine bowers
Attract the bees to rifle all the flowers.
All rest together, and together work,
None at the day-dawn tries behind to lurk;
They too, when Vesper warns them from the mead,
To hive return, and seek the rest they need.
A buzz is heard around the precincts small,
Shortly, when sleep glides peacefully on all,
A deadly silence reigns, whilst slumbers deep
Their weary frames in sweet oblivion steep.
Close by the hive, when rains impend, they stay,
And threat'ning winds the industrious bee delay;
Safe near the city walls for streams they search,
And, as when ships 'mid rolling billows lurch,
They take their ballast, so, on fickle breeze,
With pebbles small are poised the roaming bees.
You'll wonder that the bees this rule observe
Never 'mid sexual pleasures to unnerve
Their frames by goddess Venus' soft embrace
Nor do the throes of childbirth stock the race.

They take their young from leaves and luscious
plants,
And when the hive a king and commons wants,
They place them in the cells, nor labour spare
The palace and the waxen realms to rear.
They often bruise their wings against a stone,
And die beneath their loads without a groan;
So much they love among the flowers to stray
And from them work the sweets throughout the
day.
Although a fleet existence theirs may be,
(For scarce seven summers they survive to see)
A race undying yet the hive retains,
The ancient fortune of the house remains;
Through many a year that in its course speeds on
The sires of sires are reckoned by the son.
To Egypt's and to mighty Lydia's king
The people ne'er such servile homage bring,
Nor does the Parthian, nor the Mede display,
Such as the bees their royal master pay.
Their monarch safe, together knit are all,
Him lost, their bands of union from them fall;
They seize the honey treasured up with care,
The waxen structure of the combs down tear.
Him guardian of the works the bees revere;
With constant buzz all crowd around him near,

They often raise him on their backs, and place
Their frames to guard the monarch of the race;
And thus in war they seek a glorious end,
They fear not wounds whilst they their king defend.
On this account, and with this proof some find
The bees are sharers in the eternal mind;
This essence through the blue deep vault above,
Through earth, through sea, mysterious doth move.
That creatures at their birth a share received
Of life from this Pythagoras believed;
This mind at last absorbed all things he said,
No habitation was there for the dead;
They living vanished to their native sky,
And to its star each mortal thing did fly.

If in amongst the settlement you break
And from the treasures stored-up honey take,
A copious draught first from your mouth project,
And towards the bees the hostile smoke direct.
Twice do the bees fill up their combs with sweets,
Their keeper twice the time of harvest greets;
Just when the lovely Pleiades display
Their rising forms, and sailors fears allay,
And proudly leave beneath them as they rise
The streams of ocean for the vernal skies;
When too these setting stars avoid the snake,

And to the wintry waves themselves betake.
When hurt the bees a bitter rage display,
They make small wounds and in them venom lay,
Deep in the life-blood leave their hidden sting
And in the wound their lives away they fling.
But if a pinching winter you should dread
And leave the honey whence the bees are fed,
Through pity for their miserable state,
Yet, who would cease with thyme to fumigate,
And cut away the useless wax through which
An unknown lizard wastes the treasures rich?
The hives grow full of lice which dread the day,
The wasp devours what bees have stored away;
To Pallas hostile in the days of yore
Arachne weaves her subtle web before.
The more the bees 'mid ruin dire are spent
The more are they on restoration bent,
From flowery meadows they the wax will build,
With luscious sweets will fill it as 'twas filled.

But if the swarm should droop with dire disease,
(For maladies like ours attack the bees,)
Unerring signs their languid state will shew,
The flush of health will from their features go.
Their little frames a fierce consumption wastes,
Each sickening bee to Hades quickly hastes.

Then from the hive their mournful trains they lead
And carry forth the bodies of the dead;
Or to the thresholds languidly they cling,
Or stay at home nor wish to spread the wing;
Prostrate with hunger's gnawing pains they lie,
And at the freezing touch of winter die.
Slow dying out is heard a deeper groan
As when the icy blasts through forests moan,
As when loud roars the ocean's refluent wave,
And pent in furnaces flames wildly rave.
'Twere better here to kindle fragrant scent,
And give them honey to their hearts' content;
This introduce upon a hollowed reed,
And urge them languid on the sweets to feed.
Dry roses with the juice of galls infuse
Or new-made wine, enriched by boiling, use;
With Attic thyme and century supplied,
They'll flourish too on Psythian clusters dried.
A shrub, by swains Amellus styled, is found
If any search the flowery meads around;
One single stem a mass of foliage bears,
This purple hues, and that hues golden wears.
Oft, on the altars of the immortals placed,
Fair wreaths of this their sacred shrines have graced.
Sharp to the taste this plant the shepherds find
Where Mella's streams their courses gently wind,

Amellus' roots, when bees begin to pine,
Prepare by boiling them in fragrant wine;
Set temptingly your baskets filled with these,
And on your dainties you'll restore the bees.

But if the bees should all at once expire,
If nothing can repair a loss so dire,
I'll next disclose the Arcadian shepherd's course,
How swarms of bees from heifers slain he'd force;
Illustrious he! who, using bloody knife,
Could make a rotten carcase teem with life.
The whole tradition from its source I'll trace,
And with the tale my Georgic I will grace.
For where Canopus, nature's darling, stands,
And Nile's fresh streams conceal the fruitful lands,
Where coloured boats o'er meadows lightly bound,
Where Parthian bow-strings on the frontier sound,
And where the seven-mouthed flood careers along,
Rising dark Æthiop's swarthy tribes among,
These ancient realms, with all their happy race,
In this expedient sure reliance place.
A part must first be found confined and small,
Enclosed by humble roof and narrow wall;
Four windows add, north, south, east, west to view,
Take care the dazzling sun-beam to subdue.
Then choose a calf whose horns just two years old

Curve threatening on his lusty forehead bold;
And, though he struggle, slay him fierce with blows,
His nostrils twain and mouth with vigour close.
Pound down his entrails, but bruise not his hide,
Keep this entire, yet batter well his side.
Thus in the shed then leave him, likewise spread
Small twigs, and thyme, and cassia o'er the dead.
This must be done when vernal breezes woo
The wanton ocean of cærulean hue;
Before the spring in dazzling colours drest
The twittering swallow bids suspend her nest.
The tepid liquids by degrees ferment
Amid the pounded bones and putrid scent,
Hence bees forth issue, wondrous to relate!
Bees which at first are in a footless state;
Soon may be heard their pinions' busy noise,
They cautious taste in subtle air fresh joys;
Until, like showers from summer clouds descend,
Or as, when bows the fighting Parthians bend,
Darts thickly hurry from the quivering strings,
So bees break forth and spread their fresh-wrought wings.
What gods, ye nine! revealed to man this art?
From what high source did this discovery start?

The shepherd left sweet Tempe's watered vale,

The laurel-bordered river threads the dale;
Mournful o'er Peneus' sacred source he bent,
While his complaint the air surrounding rent:
" O thou, who dwell'st beneath this glassy wave,"
" Why didst thou bear me since thou couldst not
" save ?"
" If, as you tell me, Phœbus be my sire,"
" Why doomed am I to destiny so dire ?"
" Why bid me, though from stock celestial sprung,"
" To hope for place celestials among ?"
" Although expedients old and new I've tried,"
" See here, is lost my life's absorbing pride,"
" Which, though I watched with skill my fruits and
" flocks,"
" Scarce paid my pains, my pains now surely
" mocks."
" Come let thine hand destroy my fruitful trees,"
" Let hostile flames upon my stables seize,"
" Consume my standing corn, my harvest spoil,"
" Hew down my vines, the produce of my toil;"
" If you, my goddess-mother, disregard"
" These simple tokens of a just reward."
Down in her pearly grot beneath the tide,
Cyrene heard the shepherd as he cried;
Around her Nymphs Milesian fleeces spun,
Fleeces through which an azure dye had run;

Their sparkling tresses lovingly embraced,
In proud neglect, their snowy shoulders chaste.
Lucina's pains one Nymph already knows,
With virgin blush her sister's cheek still glows;
Once huntress wild, there Arethusa toils,
Doomed to resign her quiver and her spoils.
A Nymph rehearses Vulcan's vain employ,
The wiles of Mars and then his stolen joy,
The frequent loves of all the gods she sings,
And legends from remotest ages brings.
Charmed by her song the Nymphs their labours ply,
From off their spindles downy fleeces fly;
Again the cry breaks on Cyrene's ear,
Down in the crystal depths blanched lips shew fear.
Peers Arethusa forth before the rest,
Her golden locks stream on the foaming crest;
"Sister!" she cries "too true have proved thy "fears,"
"Mingles thy son with Peneus' stream his tears;"
"He calls you heartless, and your name he blends"
"With his rebuke, as o'er the bank he bends."
Fresh fear arises in Cyrene's breast,
"Bring him," she cries "that he may be our "guest,"
"Conduct him hither to my fond embrace,"

"Divinely sprung, he this retreat may grace."
She bids the azure depths asunder bound,
The curling waves in mountain-heaps stand round;
The shepherd enters where the vast abyss
Seems but to lead him to the gloomy Dis.
Amazed he views his parent's moist domains,
The rustling groves, and cave-bound liquid plains;
Amazed at all the water's mighty throes,
Down to Cyrene's central grot he goes.
He now sees all the various rivers glide
Where in the bowels of the earth they hide,
Two streams of Colchis, and the secret source
From which Enipeus bursts with sable course;
Hence father Tiber's flood and Anis strong
And Hypanis that roars the rocks among;
Hence Mysian waters; hence the bull-shaped Po,
Than which no stream through sunny meadows flow
More rapid to the troubled sea, expands
Its golden horns throughout the fertile lands.
And when he treads his mother's deep retreat,
Where pendant pumice forms her rock-bound seat,
Cyrene hears the shepherd's mournful cry
At that which draws from her not e'en a sigh.
With napkins girded smooth and fine and fair,
The Nymphs in ranks their pure libations bear.
The feast set some and some the brimming bowl,

Whilst incense clouds above the altars roll;
Mæonian wine Cyrene bids them bring,
And this o'er Ocean's briny surface fling.
She prays to Ocean father of the sphere
And groups of Nymphs to streams and forests dear.
Thrice sank the glowing flame with nectar dashed,
And thrice upon the pinnacles it flashed;
This happy omen cheers her hopeful breast,
And thus at length she utters her behest:
" By Carpathus amongst the billows lives"
" The sombre Proteus who responses gives;"
" By fishes drawn he glides o'er mighty waves"
" And with his biped steeds the ocean braves."
" He now revisits his ancestral lands,"
" Emathian shores where loved Pallene stands."
" In awe of him the Nymphs and Nereus dwell,"
" For he the darkest mysteries can tell;"
" The past he knows, the future yet untold"
" Its secret page this prophet can unfold."
" It please'd Neptune thus whose swarming shoal"
" And seals he feeds 'neath where the billows roll."
" Seize Proteus first, secure him with a chain,"
" Make him the malady and cure explain,"
" Naught will he tell unless you use this force,"
" No soft entreaties turn him to your course."
" Him bind when caught with manacles of steel,"

" He using wiles them useless soon will feel."
" When Phœbus lights up all his mid-day heat,"
" When thirsts the sward and herds seek cool
" retreat,"
" The den to which he languid crawls you'll see,"
" For I myself your trusty guide will be."
" Him buried in Lethæan slumbers take,"
" Your task is easy—he may then awake."
" But when with shackles you have bound him
" tight,"
" His former shape will vanish from your sight;"
" A bristly boar will first appear, and next"
" A tiger raging just as if 'twere vexed,"
" A lion then with long and tawny mane,"
" And then a scaly serpent he will feign;"
" You next will hear the furnace's crackling sound,"
" Next nought but pools of water will be found,"
" The more the shapes that he puts on my son,"
" The tighter chain him 'till thy cause is won,"
" Until, reluctantly, transformed he shews"
" The form he had when first from sleep he rose."
She speaks; and then his mortal frame imbues
With grateful odours of immortal dews;
A luscious gale around his tresses blows,
A potent vigour in his members glows.
'Mongst sea-worn cliffs a mighty cavern laves

Its ponderous base amidst the restless waves,
On roll the billows in each other's wake,
Disperse, and fill the fissures as they break.
To sailors wrecked the bay a shelter gives,
Within the cave the herdsman Proteus lives;
Before its entrance Proteus reared a rock
On which he sits and numbers all his flock.
In ambush Aristæus shuns the day,
The goddess having led him on his way.
Amongst the mists the Nymph her presence shrouds,
Aloof she stands begirt with fleecy clouds;
The dog-star fierce is blazing, and the sun
To dart his mid-day rays has just begun.
In eastern climes, beneath intensest glare,
The herbs are drooping, and the brooks grow rare.
The arid bed and hollow channel show
A steaming slime where rays all-piercing glow.
The prophet seeks his cave and wonted sleep,
Around him sport the monsters of the deep,
They dripping o'er the surface of the bay
In sparkling showers throw out the briny spray.
Upon the beach the flabby seals compose
Their weary flanks and slumbering repose.
The rock is reached and on it Proteus stands
And counts his monsters scattered o'er the sands,—

As when, upon the mountains, vesper calls
The flocks and herds from grazing to their stalls,
And bleating lambs the hungry wolves excite,
The shepherd numbers all before the night.
The potent charm since Aristæus knew,
Upon the prophet hastily he flew;
The limbs of Proteus scarcely settled ere
With manacles he shouting bound him there.
He mindful of his art contrives to change
His form to shapes both numberless and strange.
A flame he was, and next a bristly boar,
At last a torrent he began to roar;
But when for him no cunning found escape,
He vanquished next resumed his former shape.
"Bold youth!" says he "who bade thee to this
"cave?"
"What seek you? Hast thou ought of me to
"crave?"
"Proteus, thou know'st; thee no deceit beguiles,"
"Now cease, I pray thee, from these useless wiles;"
"My bees are lost, to thee my footsteps tend"
"At heaven's command, that you may succour lend."
At this the prophet turns his flashing eyes,
He forced at length reluctantly complies,
And fiercly gnashing in his frenzied state,
His livid lips the cause and cure relate:

" For crime of thine some god his ire displays,"
" The penalty alone that ire allays,"
" For Orpheus innocent and sad invokes
" The punishment thy lawlessness provokes."
" In vain he rages for his ravished spouse,"
" The fates oppose; no vengeance can he rouse."
" The maiden, when along the bank she sped,"
" Saw only thee, from thee alone she fled,"
" Beneath the rushes lurked a serpent nigh,"
" By him Eurydice was doomed to die."
" The troops of Dryads, all her fellows, weep,"
" From crag to crag their cries responsive leap,"
" Pangæan summits, and the Martian shore,"
" The heights of Rhodope her fate deplore."
" The Scythians, and the stream with golden sands,"
" Her end bewail amongst their weeping bands."
" Fair maid! he mourned thy destiny so dire,"
" And soothed his aching spirit on his lyre,"
" At day-break thee upon the desert shore,"
" Thee when the sun declined he would deplore;"
" He e'en the gates of Tartarus defied,"
" And grove so darkly fearful, for his bride,"
" To Hades and its awful king he went,"
" To spirits which besought can ne'er relent."
" Down to the lowest depths his music rung,"
" The ghostly shades and all the dead up sprung,"

" The ghostly shades and all the dead up sprung,"
" As many thousands as the tribes which throng"
" The peopled groves when evening shades grow
" long,"
" Or when from hills birds haste to find the bowers,"
" Wherein to shelter from the wintry showers."
" The lifeless corses of brave heroes here,"
" Loved husbands too, and wives and children dear,"
" And lusty youths before their parents eyes"
" Once burnt on pyres—all in the gloom arise."
" Upon Cocytus' banks, and all around,"
" Them dusky mire and odious weeds surround;"
" The loveless waters of the sluggish lake"
" From all the last faint hope of rescue take;"
" The gloomy channel of the fearful Styx"
" With thrice three circling bands their limits fix."
" The haunts of death the black abyss of woe"
" A ravished wonder at the music shew."
" The Furies start and listen to the sound,"
" Their writhing locks with sable vipers bound."
" The hellish monster gapes with all his throats,"
" Ixion's wheel stops turning at the notes."
" And now with care his steps he traces back,"
" Eurydice glides doting in his track."
" The queen of hell command on Orpheus laid,"
" That he should not look back upon the maid."

" The incautious swain a sudden frenzy seized,"
" Excusable if e'er aught hell appeased;"
" He stopped, and on Eurydice he looked,"
" No long delay the ardent lover brooked;"
" Unmindful he, and overcome at last,"
" That fatal glance where day-light blazed was
" cast."
" There all love's labour suddenly was lost,"
" This act so rash his dearest treasure cost."
" The rule is broken of the ruthless king;"
" Three times throughout Averuus crashes ring."
" ' Orpheus,' she cries, " ' what frenzy urged thee
" on ' "
" ' To gaze? For now our fresh-felt bliss is gone;' "
" ' Me back again the fates relentless call,' "
" ' Death's horrors on my swimming eye-balls fall.' "
" ' With awful shades encompassed now I go ' "
" ' Not thine, alas! to Tartarus below.' "
" ' To thee Farewell, a long Farewell I cry ' ; "
" ' With feeble hands to thee outstretched, I die.' "
" She spoke; and suddenly before his eyes,"
" As vapours mingling with the æther rise,"
" She spread and vanished, and no more again"
" Saw she her spouse, who shadows seized in
" vain."
" No more would Charon o'er the marshy lake,"

" Which lay before, the urgent lover take."
" What could he do ? and whither could he go ?"
" His wife had been twice snatched to realms
" below ;"
" A corpse she now was gliding o'er the wave ;"
" What words, what tears the maid from hell could
save ?"
" Beneath a rock for seven whole months, 'tis said,"
" By lonely Strymon he bemoaned the dead."
" Just as the mourning nightingale complains"
" Beneath the poplar shade in woeful strains,"
" Her young all lost, which, with a ruthless hand,"
" The watchful swain stole as he turned his land ; "
" She nightly mourns her oft-repeated tale,"
" And makes the groves re-echo with her wail."
" No love, no nuptials soothed his deep despair,"
" Alone he would to icy climes repair,"
" To snow-edged Tanaïs and Scythian lands,"
" Whereon a hoary frost unceasing stands."
" Of ravished spouse, a useless gift of hell"
" He used with mournful melody to tell."
" The soft desires of Thracian maids he spurned,"
" When they amongst their Bacchic orgies burned ;"
" At night they wanton tore him, and among "
" The wide-spread clods his bleeding members
" flung."

" When from his marble neck the head was torn,"
" And on the stream of Thracian Hebrus borne,"
" His palsied tongue as life was ebbing cried:"
" ' Alas! Eurydice, my luckless bride!' "
Thus Proteus spoke, and in he plunged headlong,
Up bubbles rose, there wreathed a whirl-pool strong.
The nymph Cyrene—she was standing near,
And thus addressed the swain who still showed fear
" My son, expel this sorrow from thy breast,"
" Herein is all the cause of fatal pest;"
" For this, the Nymphs, with whom she lightly"
" tripped"
" In mazy dance, and through the forests skipped,"
" Have sent a dire destruction 'mongst thy bees;"
" A suppliant haste to offer gifts to these,"
" Implore a pardon and the Nymphs revere,"
" They'll soon relent—their ire no longer fear."
" But first the form of worship you must know;"
" Four bulls the finest of thy herds which low"
" And graze upon Lycæus' verdant brow"
" Select, with heifers four unused to plough."
" Beside their stately shrines four altars build"
" To all the Nymphs; let hallowed blood be"
" spilled."
" In leafy groves the bodies of the kine"

" Let rest, 'till Eos' risings number nine."
" To Orpheus Lethe's poppies send below,"
" His manes lull, and banish all his woe."
" A sheep, the blackest of thy flock next slay,"
" With slaughtered steer the maiden's ire allay;"
" And then to groves where lie the oxen slain"
" Repair, for thou wilt soon thy bees regain."
The Nymph's behest he hurriedly obeys,
And hastes the altars by the shrines to raise.
Four bulls he leads the noblest of his team,
And heifers four ne'er taught to wear the beam;
And, when nine risings Eos had displayed,
He offers poppies and reseeks the glade.
And here a sudden and a wondrous scene
Is viewed, where only entrails once had been;
Throughout the putrid bowels hums the swarm,
And bursting forth a darkening troop they form;
They crowd amongst the topmost branches now,
To hang in clusters from the supple bough.

Thus did I sing of trees and meads and flocks;
Whilst deep Euphrates trembles at the shocks
Of mighty Cæsar, his triumphant sway
Submissive peoples willingly obey.
A victor he amongst the stars will shine,
And from Olympus thunder laws divine.

At sweet Parthenope was then my seat,
Where I indulged in all the pleasures sweet
Of ease inglorious, and my rustic lute
On aught that rustic was, was never mute.
Bold in my youth my tribute I have paid
To thee, O Fityrus! beneath the shade.

THE END.

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